

Castro Makes Museum Of Hemingway's Home

By JOE MCGOWAN JR.

HAVANA (AP) — "I think he was a man of activity. It was not easy for him to die in a bed."

Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro uttered those words on the steps of the late Ernest Hemingway's villa in the eastern suburbs of Havana, where he took four Americans on a recent two-hour auto tour of the Cuban capital.

Castro spoke mostly in Spanish, but switched briefly to English for the few words above. He had been talking, in Spanish, about Hemingway's death from a shotgun wound in Idaho July 2, 1961, and apparently meant Hemingway would not have wanted to die in bed.

"It was very painful to me that Hemingway's life had to end the way it did," said Castro.

He and the Nobel prize-winning author had often gone fishing together. In May of 1960, Castro won first prize in the Hemingway Annual Fishing Tournament and was given a trophy by Hemingway.

Castro led the Americans on a room-by-room tour of the home where Hemingway produced many of his books, including "The Old Man and the Sea."

Nearly an hour was spent in the walk through the spacious but plain home where Hemingway spent most of his winters over a 20-year period.

OVERLOOKS HIS FARM

The Hemingway home is perched atop a hill overlooking his Finca Vigia (Watchtower Farm) in San Francisco de Paula, about six miles east of downtown Havana.

Hemingway liked living on the hill because it was cool there at night. Some of his cattle still browse on the hillside. Orchids, formerly tended by Hemingway's wife "Miss Mary," grow under protective branches of huge trees.

The tour had started from the dock where the American freighter African Pilot had arrived, last Dec. 23, to unload food and medical supplies in payment for release of the Bay of Pigs invasion prisoners.

Castro took with him Capt. Alred Boerum, the ship's master; Leonard Scheele, former Surgeon General of the U.S.; and E. Barrett Prettyman Jr., Washington attorney, both of whom were in-



FISHING FRIENDS—American author Ernest Hemingway (left) and Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, who often went fishing together in Cuba, chat in Havana May 15, 1960, 14 months before Hemingway's death. Castro led a group of Americans on a tour of the home outside Havana where Hemingway spent most of his winters for 20 years, when they were in Cuba in connection with the December exchange of foods and medicine for Bay of Pigs invasion prisoners. The home has been preserved as a museum. (AP Photo)

involved in handling the ransom supplies; and this writer.

"When Hemingway died we immediately took steps to preserve it (the farm) exactly as it was," Castro said in Spanish.

Castro's car and two others bearing soldier guards wound up the tree-lined drive, their radio antennas twanging as they brushed against low-hanging branches and vines.

Hemingway's home was locked and Castro chatted with the Americans while a soldier summoned the custodian from his small home nearby.

The custodian, a Negro, who identified himself only as Rene, said he and his wife had worked 20 years for Hemingway. Rene had been Hemingway's valet, chauffeur and unofficial adviser. "We loved him," said Rene. "He was a very great man. Papa—he liked only to be called Papa—was kind and attentive to everyone."

Rene explained that Hemingway

zelles, deer and other animals Hemingway had shot on his numerous trips to Africa and other parts of the world.

Castro sat on one of several wooden stools while Rene told how Mrs. Hemingway liked to do a lot of the cooking, even though she employed a cook.

As the visitors walked from the dining room, furnished with a long table and several straight-back chairs, they passed a closed door.

"That is Mrs. Hemingway's bedroom," Castro explained. "It is not part of the museum. It is still hers."

Shadows had grown long when the visitors walked quietly from Hemingway's Watchtower Farm.

The silence wasn't even broken by the meowing of cats, a regular noise at the Hemingway home in days gone by. Papa had had as many as 50 cats around the house at one time.

"They, too, are gone," said Rene.

did his writing standing up, with his typewriter on top a bookshelf in his bedroom. He attributed this to a back injury Hemingway had suffered in two plane crashes in the elephant country of Uganda in East Africa in January 1954.

Adjoining the bedroom was Hemingway's study. On the top of his large desk was an Idaho liquor consumer's permit (required in that state for the purchase of package liquor), a U.S. war correspondent's badge, pictures of Hemingway, several carved wood elephants, lions and rhinos, and a number of coins from Germany and other countries. Hemingway's library included more than 5,000 volumes.

Every wall in the house held mounted heads of musk ox, ga-

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